



# U.S. Senator Judd Gregg, Chairman

## Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

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### **Chairman Gregg Convenes Hearing to Discuss Rising Health Care Costs & the Uninsured**

**Washington, DC** — Today Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, held a hearing to discuss mounting health care costs and why millions of Americans are without health insurance. HELP Committee members heard testimony from the Congressional Budget Office Director along with other health care experts.

“There is a fog around the issue of the uninsured. There is a lot of misinformation out there about who are the uninsured, how long they go without health insurance, and what is driving the cost of health insurance out of reach for many Americans. Our goal today was to cut through some of that fog to get a clear picture of the situation. In order to craft effective solutions, we must understand the scope of the problem and its root causes,” said Gregg.

“Rapidly rising health care costs and the significant number of Americans without health insurance are serious problems that have grave economic and social implications for the U.S., both domestically and globally. Health care reform and reducing the number of uninsured are again issues in the national spotlight, with plans coming from the campaign trail, from stakeholders and from the halls of Congress – covering the political and ideological spectrum. Addressing these problems is perhaps one of the most important domestic challenges facing our nation and a top priority for the HELP Committee,” said Gregg.

“Properly defining the problem and targeting solutions is essential to meaningful reform. For instance, of the 43.6 million uninsured, about half are uninsured for only a few months. It is also important to understand the composition of the uninsured. For instance, the uninsured are a diverse and dynamic group. Like America, the uninsured represent all ages, incomes, professions, educational and ethnic backgrounds,” said Gregg.

“No matter how much some may want it, there is no single, silver bullet solution. But today’s hearing framed the parameters of future debate to tackle this complex set of issues. The groundwork laid here today on the connection between the cost of insurance and the number of uninsured should guide our pursuit of solutions that will close the uninsured gap,” said Gregg.

Chairman Gregg laid down some key principles to guide the debate. Solutions should:

- ❑ Effectively target to those with the greatest need,
- ❑ Empower the health care consumer,
- ❑ Focus on care, not just coverage,
- ❑ Encourage choice, competition and quality,
- ❑ And address health care costs to improve access.

Witness testimony is available through the HELP Committee website: <http://labor.senate.gov/>

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